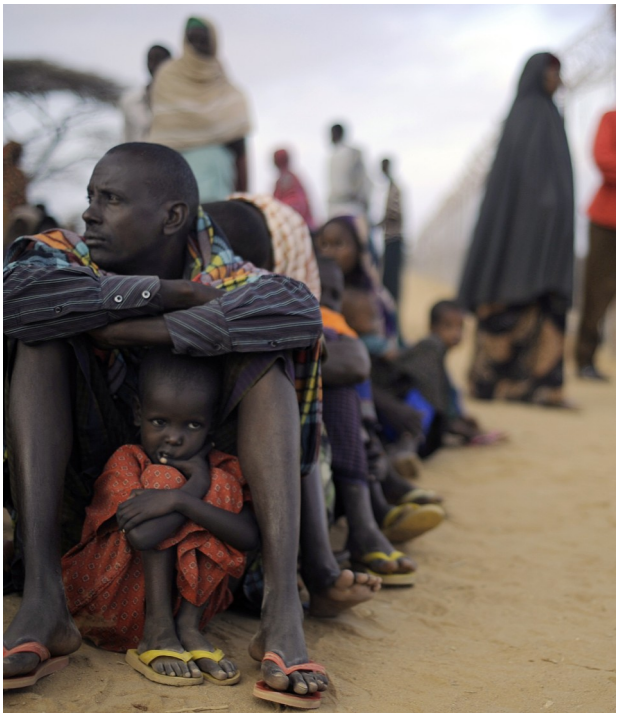
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID Higher Education Solutions Network

Makerere University
ResilientAfrica Network (RAN)

Connecting to *Accelerate* Global Development

The Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) is a partnership between USAID and seven world-class universities to create a constellation of Development Labs. This network harnesses the ingenuity and passion of university students, researchers, faculty, and their innovative partners to incubate, catalyze and scale science and tech-based solutions to the world's most challenging development problems.



Through support to the university-led Development Labs, HESN taps into a global pool of expertise to accelerate innovation through the discovery, creation, testing and scaling of efficient, cost-effective, accessible and sustainable solutions to global development challenges.

With $137 million over five years from USAID, and leveraging nearly equal investments from the institutions, the universities form a collaborative and vibrant network that extends beyond 100 partner institutions in academia, civil society and government across 38 countries.

The Challenge

How do we connect local innovators to communities and context for resilience to accelerate development impact? How can we learn from successful community responses, and help to build resilience through sustainable interventions?

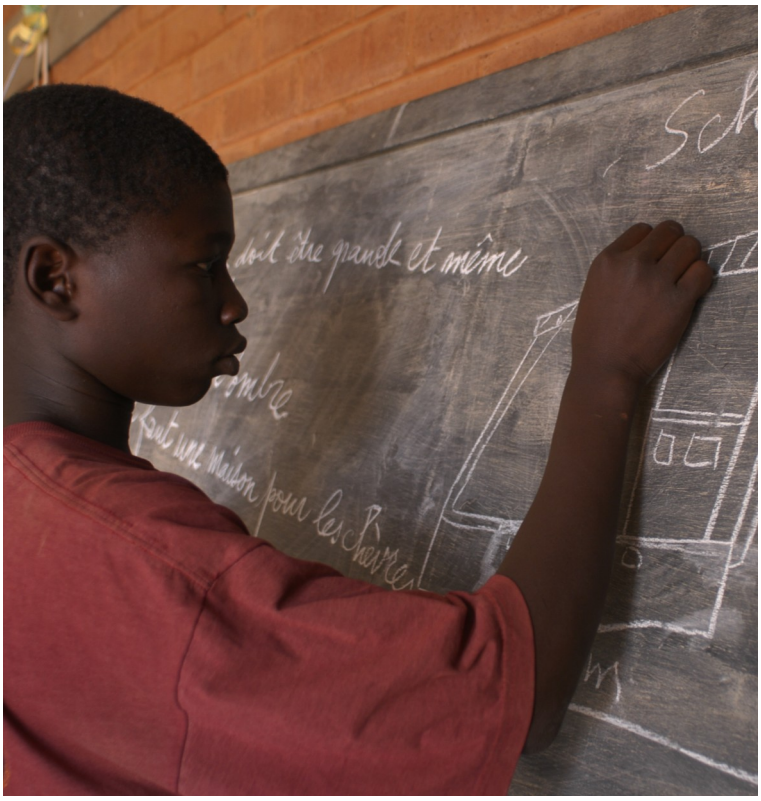
The Innovative Approach

The RAN is based on the belief that faculty, students, researchers and development experts working together can define and analyze specific resilience dimensions using a set of innovative approaches to engage with local communities. Targeted interventions can then be designed and applied to help build resilience. Evaluating the impact of these interventions will help to inform policies, programs, and resource allocations. Through USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network, Makerere University in Uganda is empowering partner universities across Africa to develop, adopt and test its Resilience Framework.

In collaboration with Stanford University, Tulane University, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the ResilientAfrica Network is equipping 18 communities and local stakeholders to more effectively recover from and respond to complex challenges by finding or catalyzing successful local solutions, sharing them with other vulnerable communities, and building a ground-breaking community of practice and platform for collaborative learning.

Four Resilience Innovation Labs (RILabs) have been established at universities regionally situated across sub-Saharan Africa, each with a specialized focus.

The Eastern Africa RILab at Makerere University examines community resilience on two fronts. First, in the face of chronic conflict and displacement – for example, comparing two northern Uganda communities that recovered from civil war at different rates. The lab also examines climate change and variability and communities' ability to adapt in Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



The West Africa RILab at the University of Health and Allied Sciences in Ghana focuses on population growth and urbanization, from fast-growing cities and low-income settlements to refugee camps, working to understand local adaptive capacities. The lab has partnered with universities in Ghana and Senegal.

The Horn of Africa RILab at Jimma University, Ethiopia, examines the impact of drought and chronic displacement on local communities and regional dynamics in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

The Southern Africa RILab at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, concentrates on the impact that droughts and chronic disease like HIV/AIDS have on resilience in selected communities in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.

The RILabs engage communities in identifying and prioritizing their needs through participatory assessments. Innovation design teams develop and test interventions in the communities, then evaluate their impact on resilience. The Network is preparing open online courses to respond to the context-driven needs of RAN members and share successful approaches with students, faculty, innovators and communities across sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information

www.usaid.gov/hesn • www.resilientafricanetwork.org • twitter.com/AfricaResilient